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Quarterly Report I
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AGRICULTURE TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM FOR TURKMENISTAN

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USAID's contract for the Agriculture Technology Program for Turkmenistan (AgTech) was signed by Weidemann Associates, Inc., on September 13, 2010. Over the next four years, AgTech will take a comprehensive approach to agricultural development in Turkmenistan by implementing high-impact activities in the livestock and greenhouse horticulture sectors to achieve the following objectives:

Objective 1: Improve Genetics, Education and Organizations for Private Livestock Producers: AI service activities and training in animal health practices, including the development of nutritional feed stock, will help farmers and households manage and care for their herds more effectively; resulting in increased production yields and revenue.

Objective2: Introduce Successful Agribusiness Practices: The project will focus on greenhouse horticulture production through a series of training activities intended to increase farmer's knowledge and adoption of improved seed varieties in growing fruits and vegetables and advanced soil management techniques. Eventually, the project may more fully examine export market development and seek to initiate buyer linkages in countries where Turkmenistan's produce provides a comparative advantage to the market.

I. Project Start-Up

During the first two months of start-up, Weidemann Associates, Inc. established an office in Ashgabat, assembled a solid team of technical experts, purchased office equipment, furniture, computers and operating networks, and distributed three Artificial Insemination (AI) kits that yielded fast and effective results.

Next Step 1: *Grant Provision (Procurement of AI Equipment)*

Conducting thorough research will be necessary to select candidates for receipt of AI equipment. One potential candidate is the Department of Veterinarian Services, under the supervision of the Livestock Association, Turkmenmallary. The Department currently provides assistance to a substantial number of private farmers.

The office was fully functional in October 2010, fully staffed as of November 22, 2010 and welcomed its Chief of Party (COP), Jason Bohoney, on December 06, 2010.

The newly hired staff and Home Office managers now keep a constant log of administrative and technical activities to ensure smooth project operations and management.

Initial project meetings were held in October with stakeholders and partners, such as Turkmenmallary and the Union of Entrepreneurs. Establishing contacts with local organizations and relationships with partners and stakeholders was a priority during this time period. The project also began reviewing previous USAID agriculture project results, as well as literature from other donor sponsored projects, to identify best practices in agriculture development. Additionally, efforts were made to begin to identify local and international short-term technical assistants whom may be brought in during the first year to provide expertise in conducting dairy, greenhouse horticulture and market evaluations and assessments.

(Serdar Yagmurov, USAID COTR and Dowlet Eminov, Chief of the Veterinarian Department in Mary, with local technical experts).

By mid-October, local veterinarians and experts, along with the Weidemann team, assessed local farmers' needs in the Mary, Dashoguz, Lebap and Ahal velayats. The project team quickly recognized the need to establish improved parent breeding stock in-country. On his return trip in November, Dr. Wes Weidemann brought three AI kits for training and testing purposes. These kits were used in December to inseminate 40 cows in the Mary Velayat.

Next Step 2: *Dairy/Horticulture Value-Chain Strengthening.*

The project is continuing to identify potential lead firms to partner with (e.g., Sulkan Dairy) and export-quality products (tomatoes, cucumbers, lemons). It also hopes to bring a Dairy/Horticulture Specialist to evaluate and assess these existing value chains in Turkmenistan.

Weidemann Associates, Inc. submitted the project's first-year Workplan and the Project Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (PMEP), which were approved by USAID in December. As part of the first-year Workplan, the project will continue to collect and analyze information from stakeholders in each Velayat to upgrade laboratory facilities, increase farm capacity and improve feed quality.

In fact, the project has already made significant progress by preparing and sending background information on feed stock/techniques and two potential mixes (including cost structure) to the Home Office in Arlington, VA for further analysis.

"These kits were much needed and have been used to inseminate 40 cows in the previous month period."
Mr. Dowlet Eminov
(Chief, Veterinarian Department Mary)

Next Step 3: *Animal Health Improvement Training-of-Trainers (TOT)*
The project is currently identifying trainers and participants for a Herd Management/Nutrition and Feed training-of-trainers (TOT) in Ashgabat in early April. Training materials are currently being developed for both modules and should be completed by the end of February.

Next Step 4: *AI Training-of-Trainers (TOT)* The project will begin this 8-week TOT in early February to provide veterinarians the much needed opportunity for hands-on, practical experience in this practice. The training will require procurement of additional AI kits, as well as research into sourcing progeny-tested semen to ensure genetic quality of the sires.

Local Office Staff

Chief of Party – Jason Bohoney:
Mr. Bohoney is the leader for the AgTech project as the Weidemann Associates' representative in the field office. His past experience includes agribusiness implementation for USAID in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, along with other consultancies throughout Central Asia and other parts of the world.

Private Sector Agribusiness Specialist – Murad Nobatov:
Mr. Nobatov has worked for years in agribusiness, especially supporting projects that design and construct greenhouses. His main role will be to manage the AgTech horticulture and greenhouse management program.

Private Sector Livestock Specialist –Akmyrat Yazhanov:
Mr. Yazhanov joins the AgTech team after serving as the Deputy General Director of the Veterinarians Association in Turkmenistan. In this position, he leads the livestock component for the AgTech Program.

Training/Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist – Zulya Achilova:
Ms. Achilova has worked recently on agriculture development projects with EU TACIS, and she provides an array of support to the project in the form of training, logistics and M&E management.

Office Manager – Luiza Ergeshyeva:
Ms. Ergeshyeva comes to the USAID AgTech project after working for a close local partner, CLAS Consulting Services. She supports the project in overall office management, including financial and accounting support services.

Home Office Staff for Weidemann Associates

Technical Director – Wes Weidemann:
Dr. Weidemann, a PhD Agricultural Economist and President of Weidemann Associates, is directly involved by providing oversight and input on the technical implementation of the USAID AgTech Program. His years spent working on dairy farms in Wisconsin will be especially useful for the delivery of the livestock component.

Project Manager – Chuck Yesolitis:
Mr. Yesolitis has business development management experience in Central Asia and manages the budget and technical work plans for the AgTech Program. He also liaises with USAID regarding project implementation from the home office.

Project Coordinator – Elina Pavlova:
Ms. Pavlova provides project backstopping assistance and liaises with project staff for technical implementation support from the home office.

II. Initial Stakeholders Meeting

Weidemann Associates Inc. organized a post-award orientation conference call on Nov. 23, 2010 with representatives from USAID/CAR Mission, including Regional Legal Advisors and the Financial Management Officer. The result of such collaboration proved very fruitful and helped to ensure both parties had a clear understanding of project deliverables and contractual reporting requirements

The agenda for this meeting was comprehensive and included a review of MOUs, SON waivers, TCN waivers, geographic codes (particularly in the purchase of commodities), grants management, approval procedures and material, procurement of commodities and property administration, invoices, VAT recovery,

Next Step 5: *Training Database Development*
The project will be developing the specifications and parameters for requisite information to collect from training participants. This will serve as the foundation for development of a Microsoft Access database to use to report on key PMEP indicators.

Next Step 6: *Feed Trials*
The project developed a scope of work to hire an international expert to help develop an economically viable feed mix for local farmers to use to improve milk production.

Next Step 7: *Greenhouse Demonstration Sites and Training*
The project will continue to visit each Velayat to identify demonstration greenhouse sites and participants for training in greenhouse sites and participants for training in greenhouse construction, soil management and plant care

accruals, as well as other financial management concerns.

The session concluded with a plan for receiving and distributing funds, expected obligations, key issues of concern, indicators, project marketing and branding, Public Outreach participant training, gender and environmental considerations. It is anticipated that such meetings will continue to be conducted periodically throughout the duration of the project.

III. First AI Activity

On November 13, 2010, Weidemann Associates, Inc., distributed three artificial insemination (AI) kits to three veterinarian technicians managed by Dowlet Eminov, Chief of the Veterinarian Department in Mary.

During a follow-up call on December 17, 2010, Mr. Eminov expressed his gratitude to USAID, remarking that "these kits were much needed and have already been used to inseminate 40 cows in the previous month period". He noted that the technicians plan to continue using this equipment on a fee-for-service basis and have already developed a monitoring system to report on their rate of success.

The project will continue to engage Mr. Eminov as a key partner in Mary and will invite these three technicians to participate in its' planned AI training-of-trainers course in February 2011.

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January - March 2011 Activity Plan

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	JAN	FEB	MAR
1). Develop training modules for artificial insemination (AI) training program	The project will collaborate with an experienced AI practioner to develop a course used for training veterinarians in the theoretical and practical aspects of AI.			
2). Develop project training database	The project will design a Microsoft Access training database for use in collecting and analyzing key participant data needed for reporting to USAID.			
3). Conduct AI training-of-trainers (TOT) course	The project will hire a Master Trainer to train 10 veterinarians in how to properly conduct artificial insemination on dairy cows. This training will take place in and around Ashgabat for 8-weeks.			
4). Develop animal health improvement training modules	The project will collaborate with several experts to develop 2 technical modules for use in training veterinarians and farmers: a). Herd Management b). Nutrition and Feed Management			
5). Develop an economically-viable dairy cow feed mix for use by farmers	The project will work with an international expert to create a feed mix designed to increase milk production yields. It is envisioned that this expert would be in and around Ashgabat for up to 12 days.			
6). Develop greenhouse horticulture improvement training modules	The project will collaborate with several experts to develop 2 technical modules for use in training veterinarians and farmers: a). Greenhouse construction and soil management b). Plant care and agrotechnology			
7). Conduct greenhouse construction and soil management training-of-trainers (TOT) course	The project will hire a Master Trainer to deliver a 2-day training course to 10 horticulture specialists. This training will take place in Ashgabat and focus primarily on practical farm-level improvements.			